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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 000139

SIPDIS
NOFORN

CG SOCEUR FROM DATT/ARMA
DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/13/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAO](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [NATO](#) [HR](#) [DEFENSE](#)
REFORM

SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR MG KISNER, CG SOCEUR, VISIT TO CROATIA

Classified By: COL Brendan McAlloon, DATT, for reasons 1.4 (b) & (d).

¶1. (SBU) Sir, your visit is very important for the dedication ceremony in honor of MSG Ivica Jerak (YER-ak). You will meet Ambassador Bradtke at the ceremony and will be hosted later by the Chief of the General Staff, GEN Josip Lucic (LOOTS-itch).

¶2. (C/NF) Atmospherics. Your trip comes at a time when the excellent security relationship between Croatia and the United States continues to strengthen. Croatia appreciated the United States being one of the earliest countries to ratify Croatia's NATO accession protocol and the signal of support for Croatia that it sent. Recently, a small group of Slovenian nationalists has unexpectedly delayed ratification of Croatia's accession to NATO by requesting a national referendum, tying it to a border dispute dating to the breakup of the former Yugoslavia. The Croatians want the ratification process in Slovenia to come to a timely conclusion so Croatia can become a full member of the Alliance before the NATO Summit in April, a goal which the United States shares. GEN Lucic was unexpectedly reappointed as CHOD last year for a second five-year term, though many doubt that he will serve past 2011 when the current Croatian President reaches the end of his second mandate. Lucic is an affable man but he is close to being burned out after almost 7 years as CHOD. I don't expect him to offer much in substance to the conversation. The Croatian Special Forces, however, are his favorites as is the commander, Colonel Zupanic (ZHU-paan-itza), and he has lent his presence to this event for that purpose.

¶3. (C/NF) Atmospherics continued. I don't expect that the Croatians will have a laundry list of requests for support for you. Croatian pride normally keeps them from requesting financial assistance but if it is offered they won't refuse. If on the other hand we have support requirements that Croatia is well-suited to fulfill, it would be best to couch them as requests for help to a friend and future ally.

¶4. (C) JACKAL STONE. JS09 is scheduled to take place here in Croatia in September 2009. The Croatians are

proud that they have been chosen to host the event and see this as proof that they are taken seriously by the U.S. military in general and our SOF in particular. We finished the Main Planning Conference in Split, Croatia this week.

15. (C) OMLTs. Croatia has the only non-NATO OMLT in Afghanistan as part of its approximately 277 troop contribution to ISAF. The OMLT is deployed with the 3rd Kandak of the 209th ANA Corps. Croatia pays all expenses for the OMLT with the exception of U.S.-provided stratlift. They have no operational limitations on deployment or ROE, but do have two caveats: no CT and no Counter-narcotics operations. Croatia and its partner the Minnesota National Guard will deploy a combined Combat Support OMLT next month. Later this month Croatia will deploy a garrison level OMLT. Croatia has expressed a desire to deploy a PRT in the future but we assess that the current focus on OMLTs is the best use of its capabilities in the near to mid term. Regarding communications within Afghanistan, the Croatian OMLT is caught in a Catch-22 in that as a non-NATO force contributor, Croatia is not allowed to have the required NATO COMSEC systems. Last year we were able to develop a work-around by deploying a U.S. commo team with the OMLT. The U.S. team has redeployed, however, and the Croatian OMLT is currently without secure NATO comms. This issue has been raised in Brussels but as of yet no NATO nation has volunteered a communications team for the Croatian OMLT. Although Croatia's NATO accession will probably be finalized in April making the COMSEC problem moot, we will still have to contend with the acquisition backlog

for the required radios for some time.

16. (C) KFOR: The Croatian Parliament has authorized the deployment of two helicopters and 20 airmen to Kosovo in 12009. We expect that the Croatians will deploy two of their new MI-171Sh lift helicopters. This will be the first deployment outside of Croatia for the Air Force. Croatia has expressed a willingness to deploy two more helicopters to KFOR next year. SOCEUR finished an evaluation of Croatia's ability to provide lift support last week and from all accounts the results were very positive.

17. (C) Peacekeeping: Croatia prides itself on its transition from a security consumer with UN Peacekeepers on its territory to a security provider with Croatian Armed Forces (CAF) elements involved in UN peacekeeping operations around the globe, to include 98 CAF personnel on the UN mission in the Golan Heights. Croatia has deployed 15 of its Special Forces soldiers to the EU-led mission in Chad where they are serving within the Polish sector. With these deployments Croatia is in the process of implementing its plans to increase and sustain its PKO contributions from around 250 soldiers in 2007 to 600 soldiers by 2010.

18. (C) ASPA: The U.S. FMF and IMET programs were suspended in July 2003 due to American Serviceman Protection Act (ASPA) sanctions. As a result, in the past few years the CAF depended entirely upon national resources to accomplish its NATO partnership goals and to equip its forces for ISAF. Croatia is the only ISAF partner and new NATO invitee that accomplished its transformation and financed its ISAF commitments without FMF or Coalition Support Funding. The suspension of IMET during this time has had a telling impact throughout the CAF. Most notably is the lack of U.S.-educated staff officers at the senior and mid-grade officer level to fill critical billets on the MOD, CAF, and NATO Staffs.

19. (SBU) FMF/IMET levels. Croatia did not receive any FMF in FY08, and will receive only 1.8 million dollars in FMF in 2009. IMET is similarly under-funded for a NATO invitee with only 309K in FY08 (including the 9K in end-of-year fallout) and is projected to receive 500K in

FY09. The proposed budget numbers trend better in FYs 10 and 11.

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